

BETTY'S ENGAGEMENT.

By Leslie Holmes.

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Betty rode in the elevator nearly every day. Allen Johnson ran the elevator every day and knew all about Betty.

In fact, he was pretty sure that any girl who got off regularly at the sixth floor and turned to the right was bound for the room whose door carried this legend:

JAMES CONVERSE.
Theatrical Agent and Producer.
General Provider of Stage Talent.
Mobs a Specialty.

Mr. Converse's office was the sort of a B C class in stage craft where ambitious young men and women were given a chance to participate in mob scenes, court balls, hunting parties, etc., at a salary ranging from 50 cents to \$1 a performance.

Converse had been in the business many years, had amassed a comfortable fortune and could point with pride to the fact that many a girl and lad who had started with him in the mob scene of a big production was now drawing a good salary as leading man or woman or was even starring.

Some one had told Betty Vincent of this fact, and so she hung on to the hope of an opening at the Converse office with the despair of a girl who finds herself compelled to earn her living without any particular preparation



"TAKE OFF THAT LACE THINGUMBOB AND CARRY IT HOME WITH YOU."

and who thinks the stage offers the one field where experience is not necessary.

Day after day Betty smiled and said "Good morning" to Allen, and day after day Allen watched the roses fade in her cheeks and the circles deepen around her pretty violet eyes. He saw, too, her brave struggle to keep up appearances. One day the little fur toque she wore would be covered with ribbons, again it would blossom forth in somewhat faded violets, and another day a home curled plume would fall from its left side. Allen had been leading aspirants at the Converse office just long enough to read the signs airtight.

Then came a morning when he took Betty, all smiles, from the sixth floor to the first. She was the sole passenger on his car, and he ran it down very slowly.

"Yes, thank you. I'm to go on in the big ballroom scene in 'The Love of a Princess'—a dollar a night, and it will be all clear because I can wear my grandmother's wedding dress. It's a lovely brocade!"

The car came to a stop, and passengers crowded in. Betty disappeared in the crush.

"Humph!" muttered Allen to himself, giving the lever a sort of unreasonable jerk. "Have to provide their own costumes. That doesn't look as if the management was rolling in money. Guess I'll look it up."

Night Allen knew all about the company and the management of "The Love of a Princess." He wanted to hunt up Betty, who he knew would come to more to the Empire-building. Then he changed his mind and, instead, glared at the manager of the company, who rode at times in his car.

"Let her have her thing," he said to himself. "She's got to have it, and no talking of mine will convince her."

Nevertheless that night when Betty came out of the big hall where the rehearsals were being held Allen was waiting for her.

She looked surprised, but he tucked her arm through his in brotherly, protecting fashion.

"You might as well get used to stage door admirers," he said, with a laugh. "Get to have 'em, you know. Anyhow, I live up your way, and it's no time of night for a girl to be out alone."

That was the beginning of his curious guardianship. When the rehearsals were transferred from the hall to the theater he was more vigilant than ever, and somehow he so ingratiated himself with the old doorman that he was permitted to sit back on a pile of stage "props" and watch the rehearsal. Sometimes Betty wondered why he was so grave when they started homeward. She did not know that the worldwise Allen had ushered in this same theater for many months and knew a "frost" when he saw it, even in rehearsal. But he did not contradict her when she rattled on about the wonderful things she intended to do for her half invalid mother on that \$8 a week, for "The Love of a Princess" was to have two matinees a week.

The night of the dress rehearsal Allen sat watching her with hungry eyes. Almost he wished that he had tried for the position of "walking gentleman" just to promenade the stage with that vision in soft old lavender brocade on

his arm. Then his eyes snapped, as when Betty came off he whispered: "Take off that lace thingumbob and carry it home with you."

Betty looked surprised, but she had learned to defer to his suggestions, and so, when she came out in her long, rough coat and fur toque she carried the lace bertha under her arm.

"That is what makes the dress look so pretty," she urged. "It's real lace." "Yes, I saw that," answered Allen, "but some five cent a yard stuff will do for stage wear, and if some of them got wise to the fact you had real lace they'd cop it and pawn it. See, you don't know anything yet about life behind the scenes."

At first Betty had felt inclined to resent Allen's espionage, but he was a good looking chap, and she soon found, especially after the first night, when she was the only one of the "extra ladies" to receive flowers—violet buds that must have cost several dollars—that his regular attendance upon her made her the envy of many fellow players.

The papers gave the new production bad notices, but the audiences continued large, especially in the orchestra, and Betty remained hopeful.

"Paper," said Allen in disgust as he watched the audience gather on Thursday night. And he was right. The house was being filled on passes. "The Love of a Princess" was a failure.

But Betty, watching the big audiences, could not be persuaded—not until Saturday night came, when the company was called together and dismissed without salaries.

Betty was very quiet and white when she came out, her grandmother's frock under her arm.

"It's all over," she said sadly. "You were right. And—and we didn't even get one week's salary. There's all my car fare, and my new slippers, and a bill at the drugist's. Mother's cough has been so much worse."

Allen's firm clasp closed over her trembling hand.

"There, there, don't you worry. I saw it coming before the first night even, and my brother, who's got a good thing in the Daniels Realty company, is going to put you in there to mind the switchboard. Tomorrow's Sunday, and he'll take time to show you how to run it, so when you start in Monday you won't seem green. It's eight a week to start and something better ahead, 'cause you've got a pull, see?"

"Oh, you are so kind to me! I don't see why."

Betty was half sobbing. Allen looked down upon her drooping head in speechless amazement. Girls certainly were queer things, he argued. Hadn't he shown her plainly enough? He cleared his throat, but his voice remained husky.

"Don't you know—ain't you seen—that I loved you—loved you from the first day you came into my car? But I wasn't going to tell you just yet—not until I got a better job. The first of the year I'm going into the advertising line with that firm on the tenth floor, and then—Say, have you seen those model flats up on West Eighty-seventh street? I think that sunlight from the south court would be grand for your mother, and if you get an advance and the advertising business pans out we might—"

Goodness, was she never going to stop crying? Was this the way girls always behaved when men proposed to them? Suddenly the brocade dress fell at his very feet, and before he could pick it up Betty's two hands clasped on his arm, and her eyes, raised to his, shone like two violet buds in dew.

"Oh, Allen, you are perfectly grand! If the princess had had a love like yours, the show never would have closed."

And then—But never mind. Some policemen are very tactful, and the one who was stroiling their way turned his back and picked up the brocade dress that was rolling straight for the gutter.

Origin of Jackstones.

An ancient painting discovered at Renna represents two women in Greek costumes playing the game which they called astragalus, the Greek for huckle bone. One has evidently just caught on her hand the bones which she had tossed up, while the other is waiting to try her skill. This game was no doubt the beginning of our game of jacks.

An English writer says that from earliest times huckle bones of sheep and goats were used by women and children to play a game which consisted of throwing these bones into the air and catching them on the back of the hand.

Makes the Sun Melt Iron.

There is an apparatus which concentrates the rays of the sun from more than 6,000 small mirrors on a spot about seven inches in diameter. The heat generated is about 7,000 degrees F. Iron can be melted in less than a minute and fire clay fused in about three minutes by this machine. Magnesia, one of the hardest things to melt, requiring a heat of about 6,400 degrees F., can be melted in twenty minutes.

Ducky's Excursion.



Miss Duck went out one sunny day. To search for puddles in which to play. (Whether she found them I can't say. I didn't follow her on her way.)

PAYING AND SPENDING TAXES

Referring to the six million dollar capitol building at Madison, Wis., and its contention that governments are costing too much, the Ohio Magazine hints at a point that cannot be too gravely considered. The point is this—it is no apology for public extravagance to say that the corporations pay the cost. That is perfectly true.

It seems to be an object of government to hide from taxpayers the fact that they are bearing any burdens at all. They are made to believe that the corporations furnish the public money, and they are thereby relieved of paying taxes. But where do the corporations get their money, if not off the people? And whenever an extra burden is put upon the corporation, it is immediately transferred to the shoulders of the people, who pay it out of the sugarbowl, the skidlet, the coal pile, the trolley ride, and the walk down town.

"Well," one says, "that's the kind of taxation—where one feels it to the least possible extent." And that is the kind of taxation that is the mother of half the graft, corruption and extravagance in this country. When the so-called statesmen make a man believe that somebody else is paying his taxes, they go on spending his money in all needless and extravagant ways. When a man is made to feel that a corporation pays his taxes, he is not so apt to inquire what becomes of the money. Any old political machine can have it for all he cares.

In an article in Moody's Magazine, by R. L. Bridgeman, occurs this observation: "A policy of direct taxation is more conducive to honest administration than the policy of indirect taxation, whereby the people do not know how much money is taken from them, and therefore have less personal interest in demanding what becomes of it." It is this easy paying taxation, this belief that the corporations are paying the bills, that leads the people to look on with unconcern at the outrageous extravagance that is going on. Every man should understand that the dollar the corporation pays to the public treasury it exacts from him, and as an intelligent and dutiful citizen he should see that it is not uselessly and lavishly spent.—Editorial: Ohio State Journal.

IMPROVING TAX LAWS.

Taxation is the subject of investigation and discussion in many states, and in three reports have been made by special commissions which give an interesting indication of the present trend of expert opinion.

New York's commission recommends the abolition of the tax on personal property and the imposition of a progressive tax on inheritances. The California commission is also opposed to taxing personal property, but asserts that if it is to be taxed the revenue should go to the counties exclusively with the revenue from the state on realty. It is further recommended that all corporations and franchise taxes be reserved to the state.

The report of the Massachusetts commission proposes the taxation of direct as well as collateral inheritances, of billiards and of stock transfers, the retention of all franchise exactions by the state, and a graded tax on automobiles. It is asserted that with these additional levies, the Bay State could readily enough abolish the tax on realty as well as on personal property, except for municipal purposes.

Here in Rhode Island the system of taxation is inadequate and inequitable, but no effort toward a betterment has been or is likely to be made as long as the country towns are in the ascendant.—Providence News-Democrat.

A STATISTICAL CORRECTION.

In an article on the excise tax figures were given purporting to show the excise tax collected by the state from public service corporations. It develops that all of the figures were not correct. The records of the auditor of state's office show the money paid by corporations in the different classifications was as follows:

Artificial gas companies, \$64,426.11; natural gas companies, \$113,843.76; waterworks companies, \$7,791.98; electric light companies, \$34,272.56; street, suburban and electric railway companies, \$264,451.22; messenger and signal companies, \$2,575.64; express companies, \$16,684.43; pipe line companies, \$59,789.50; Pullman companies, \$8,198.12; telegraph companies, \$3,025.82; water transportation, \$1,757.16; telephone companies, \$81,718.40; railroad companies (steam), \$1,384,800.19; freight line and equipment companies, \$7,635.42.

TAXATION AND REFORM IN OREGON

The legislature of the state of Oregon has been working out taxation problems during its last session. In line with other progressive states, an amendment to the Oregon constitution is proposed. The citizens interested in tax reform want an amendment giving the legislature the broad power of classifying the subject of taxation and deciding what will be taxed for state and what for local purposes. Oregon has had a taxation commission at work for some time. From its report, recently submitted, the conclusion reached there is that the general property tax is not working well and that it ought to be abolished in part at least. It is suggested that it would be well to have separate sources for revenue for state and for local government, and the only way to attain this is by amending the constitution.

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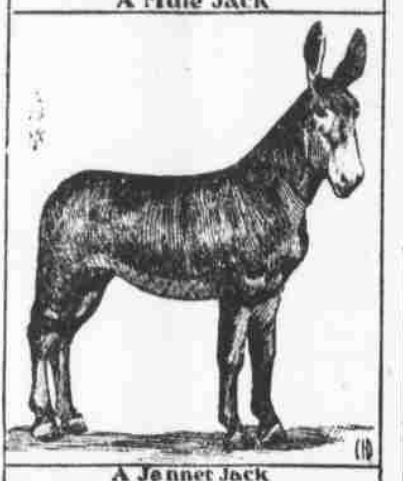
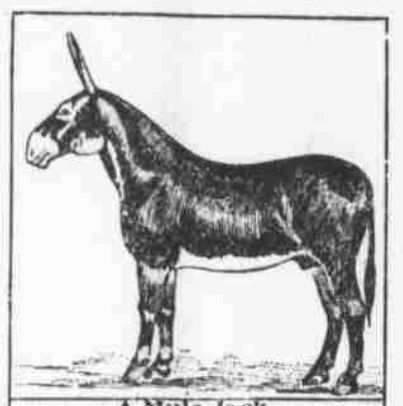
THE Toledo Blade Toledo, Ohio.

BREEDING THE HARDY MULE

A well known Ohio breeder, A. Kretzer, writing in the National Stockman and Farmer, gives his experience in raising and handling jacks and mules, as follows:

I am so situated that I hear from almost every state in the Union and foreign countries inquiring for jacks and mules, and the demand for good jacks and mules has been rapidly increasing for the last ten years, while the price has been advancing. Last season I sold 123 head of jacks and several hundred mules, and nearly all I heard from did well.

Mules can be raised cheaper than any other stock considering their value.



They are less liable to disease than horses, can stand heat better, are not easily blighted, as they are a very careful and sensible animal. In mountainous countries the sure footed mule is used almost exclusively as the beast of burden. They can draw heavy loads, such as a blunder or corn harrow, with much less worry than the horse in hot weather.

In muddy or flat countries the mule should be bred with large feet, the same as horses.

Why do the armies of the world want mules? Simply because of the mule's nature. He can withstand more hardships than the horse. His heavy jawbone enables him to live on very rough food or forage. He responds readily to kind treatment and will stand more exertion and live longer than the horse. Nearly every state in the Union raises more or less mules, and in the great majority of them the mules are valued on an average of \$10 higher than horses.

Now, if the mule is so valuable when his dam is bred in the country generally to the jack, only when she is deemed too much blighted or unfit to breed if he had an equal chance of having for his dam the best mares in the land such as are bred to these fine horses? We don't want these horse breeders to quit breeding, nor will they do so, for we are looking to better mares to get better mules.

Some people have the idea that mules and jacks are vicious and hard to handle. I have handled them for twenty-two years and in large numbers, sometimes as many as 300 on my farms at one time, and have never been bitten, kicked or hurt by either mule or jack, and I find to handle them with kindness there is no more harm in them than in the gentlest of horses.

I have never had a jack or a mule founder, either on grain or water. I do believe a good mule team can do as much work as a good team of horses on half the amount of grain.

For the care of mules, we give them all they want to eat and drink and work them all the time. Our mules are always fat, and we never have a sick one. As the mule will not breed, I think they were created for a special purpose—and that a true, honest, durable and valuable worker. And we as breeders should aim to breed for the best, the largest and smoothest, with plenty of bone, good style and action. This can only be done by breeding first class mares to first class jacks, and then you will find when you raise mules they will command a first class price.

The illustrations of a mule jack and a jennet jack are from Breeder's Gazette, Chicago.

Care of the Brood Mare.

The care we give the mare is the foundation on which we are to rear the future horse. After having made a selection of the kind of horse we wish to produce and having mated the mare she may continue doing her work as usual. She will be much better than if she remains idle. As a coming mother she should have the best of care and careful grooming. There can be no rule for feeding that will fit every case. There is no better ration for a brood mare than oats and bran, mixed clover and timothy hay. During the winter if the mare is idle she should be turned out for exercise in the lot every day unless it is stormy. When spring work begins she may take her place in the team if worked carefully.—Pennsylvania Horseman.

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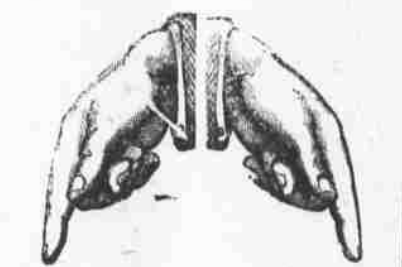
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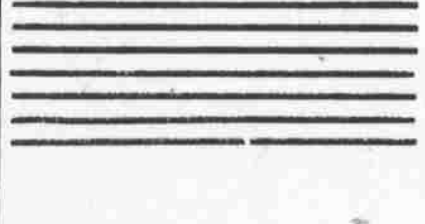
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